GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:158
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005
STRENGTHENING OF PDS
Patel Shri Dinsha J.;Rao Shri Devarakonda Vittal

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently convened a meeting to strengthen the Public Distribution System/Targeted Public Distribution System as reported in the Hindu dated December 21, 2004;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof with special reference to proposals regarding vigilance committees and issue of smart cards for ration distribution;

(c) whether the Government has issued guidelines to the States in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of State Governments thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c) & (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 158 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 14-3-2005 IN THE LOK SABHA.
(a): Yes Sir.

(b): At the meeting convened on 20th December, 2004 to elicit the views of the Members of the Parliament on strengthening the Public Distribution System, various suggestions were made relating to identification of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, elimination of bogus ration cards, increase in the number of BPL families as requested by various State Governments; increasing the economic viability of the Fair Price Shops, involving Self Help Groups of Woman in the management of the Fair Price Shops, convergence of food based welfare schemes with Targetted Public Distribution System, displaying of Citizens` Charter in regional languages at all the Fair Price Shops, curb diversion of foodgrains, and involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions and local MPs and MLAs in the Vigilance/Monitoring Committees. Government is already having a Pilot Project on issue of smart cards for distribution of foodgrains, in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala. Citizens` Charter provides for involvement of MPs/MLAs in the Vigilance Committees to be set up at the State level. At the District level and Fair Price Shops level involvement of people`s elected representatives has already been provided.

(c) & (d): The implementation of the Targetted Public Distribution System is a joint responsibility of both the Central and State Governments wherein the Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of foodgrains upto the Principal Distribution Centres (PDCs) in each State and the State Governments are responsible for the identification of BPL families, issue of ration cards and distribution and monitoring of foodgrains to the people/vulnerable sections through the Fair Price Shops all over the country. Follow up action on various suggestions to strengthen the Targeted Public Distribution System is a continuous process and action on the suggestions of the Hon`ble MPs has already been initiated in consultations with the State Governments.